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Cal Poly Arts Presents the Legendary Bob Newhart March 27 at the PAC

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Bob Newhart, famous for his classic one man/two-way phone conversations, is a household name to generations thanks to his two extremely successful, long-running television series.

On Saturday, March 27, 2004 at 8 p.m., Bob Newhart, with special guest Cal Poly's University Jazz Band No. 1, will take center stage in the Christopher Cohan Center.

Cal Poly Arts presents Newhart, who stops in San Luis Obispo on a tour of sold-out comedy performances. In addition to his worldwide audience, Newhart continues to pick up new fans -- especially youngsters and college students who watch re-runs of his hit TV shows and are "discovering" Newhart for themselves.

Newhart's comedy concerts are filled with new, original routines culled from today's newspapers and delivered in his unique style, plus some of his early classic routines, which audiences demand during every show.

Opening the Cal Poly Arts evening will be University Jazz Band No. 1, performing under the direction of Cal Poly Music Dept. professor Paul Rinzler.

Newhart's career began after serving in the Army. He worked by day as an accountant and an advertising copywriter while also performing evenings in a theatrical stock company in his hometown of Chicago.

During this time, Newhart and ad agency colleague Ed Gallagher used to amuse themselves by making long, antic phone calls to each other. They recorded these as audition tapes for what Newhart calls "a poor man's 'Bob & Ray' syndicated radio show."

When Gallagher decided to stay with an advertising career, Newhart simply "picked up the slack," as he puts it, and created his signature staged two-way telephone conversations.
After Newhart was introduced to the head of talent at Warner Bros. Records, he soon released "The Button-Down Mind of Bob Newhart," which became the first comedy album to go to Number 1 on the charts. He was then an immediate sellout in comedy concerts, in nightclubs, and on theatre stages all over America.

Seven more albums followed, each extremely successful and selling millions of copies. When Billboard issued their "100 Most Popular Albums of the Past 40 Years," Newhart -- the only comedian on the list -- came in at Number 20, besting some of the greatest recording talents, such as The Beatles, Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston, and Elvis Presley.

Newhart's first network television series was a variety show, which won the coveted Peabody Award and an Emmy.

Then "The Bob Newhart Show" debuted in 1972 on CBS, marking the beginning of a six-year run. It co-starred Suzanne Pleshette as Bob's wife, Emily, and -- according to most critics and television historians -- one of the finest casts of feature players on television.

By 1978, Newhart felt it was time to leave television and move on to other projects. His popularity carried over to motion pictures, where he was cast in a number of films with some of the biggest stars in Hollywood, including "Hell Is For Heroes" with Steve McQueen; "On A Clear Day You Can See Forever" with Barbra Streisand; "Catch 22" with Jon Voight and "Little Miss Marker" with Walter Matthau.

Newhart never gave up his first love: live, stand-up performances. Within his rigorous television and film schedules, he continued his stand-up comedy work whenever he could work it in.

He later returned to CBS with "Newhart," playing a New York, do-it-yourself book author turned Vermont innkeeper. Again surrounded by an exceptional ensemble of quirky characters, the series went on to enormous success for eight seasons, ending only because Newhart felt it was better to put the show to rest while it was at its peak.

Newhart resumed his motion picture work to popular and critical acclaim. After co-starring with Kevin Kline, Tom Selleck, and Debbie Reynolds in "In and Out," he had back-to-back co-starring roles with Reese Witherspoon in "Legally Blonde II" and with Will Ferrell last November in the box office holiday favorite, "Elf."

Newhart was also recently seen in four dramatic episodes of NBC's hit show, "E.R."
Among Newhart's favorite honors are his selection as Grand Marshall of the 102nd Tournament of Roses Parade, joining 101 other world-famous leaders, stars, politicians and other world notables. He was also inducted into the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame.

Tickets for the performance range from $42 - $54, with student discounts available, and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Ticket Office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. To order by phone, call 805/756-2787; to order by fax: 805/756-6088. Order on-line at www.pacslo.org.

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